Kolanik ''a stateless Pole, born in Pittsburgh'' and deported him to Nazi Germany as a slave laborer. While incarcerated, he faced a myriad of abuses starvation, backbreaking work, beatings, torture, and living conditions not fit for animals. Everyday was an incomprehensible struggle to stay alive with only the dream of making it home keeping him going. It wasn't until the U.S. 75th Infantry Division liberated the labor camp in 1945 that Mr. Kolanik regained his freedom and basic human rights. Upon his release, the horrific conditions he suffered through were obvious. Normally a strong 155-pound man, Mr. Kolanik had been reduced to 103 pounds. He regained his strength and health, joined the U.S. Merchant Marines, and returned to the United States.

However, his father's story, and many others might not have been heard if not for the tireless efforts of Michael Kolanik, Jr. His love for his father and his desire to bring to light the suffering these American citizens endured drove Michael, a Vietnam Veteran, to make sure Congress recognized those incarcerated by the Axis. The recognition his father, who died in 1992 would not live to see.

Approximately 3,000 civilian internees are still alive. The least we can do is finally honor these survivors and acknowledge their heroic and courageous sacrifices. That is what my resolution does.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN UZBEKISTAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the situation in Russia seems to be deteriorating further every day. An enfeebled Boris Yeltsin, under pressure from a Communist-dominated parliament, has named Foreign Minister Evgenyi Primakov, the anti-American former chief spy, Russia's Prime Minister. As we watch this man entrusted with Russia's domestic policy while maintaining control over foreign affairs, our once fond hopes for political and economic reform in the former Soviet Union are fraying at the edge. The rout of Russia's so-called reformers has raised troubling questions about the policy of supporting one man in the name of security and stability.

While the situation in Central Asia is very different, of course, there are some disturbing parallels. specifically, I rise today to discuss the depressing state of human rights and democratization in Uzbekistan, which the United States apparently has come to see as an anchor of stability in a complex region. The Departments of State and Defense have avidly pursued a relationship with Uzbekistan. I do not criticize them for doing so. Uzbekistan is the most populous country in Central Asia, and if it lacks the large-scale potential of Kazakstan or Turkmenistan to export oil and gas, it still has impressive reserves of natural resources. Moreover, its strategic location and its pro-American stance bolster the case for good relations between Washington and Tashkent, especially in the face of longstanding neo-imperialist instincts in Russia.

Nevertheless, Uzbekistan remains the second most repressive country among the new independent states, slightly ahead of benighted Turkmenistan. The rationale Tashkent offers for the acknowledged lack of freedom is the need to ensure stability. But President Islam Karimov's policies may well create the very dangers these policies are ostensibly designed to avert.

Over the last ten years, it occasionally seemed Uzbekistan might develop towards genuine pluralism. Opposition movements were allowed to function, though under constant duress, from the late 1980s to mid-1992. In December 1991, Karimov actually permitted an opposition leader to run against him. But since June 1992, when another opposition leader was nearly beaten to death in broad daylight, the regime has clamped down on all expressions of dissent. No opposition parties may function, opposition literature is confiscated, and Soviet-style censorship stifles freedom of the press. The authorities have even refused to register an independent human rights monitoring organization, although western human rights NGOs have been operating in Uzbekistan since 1996. Uzbek and western groups have compiled a list of some 35 political prisoners, not counting about 20 more caught up in a wave of mass arrests in the Fergana Valley last year.

To mask these realities, President Karimov, like all the leaders of the new independent states, have adopted the fashionable rhetoric of democratization and created institutions which purportedly realize that goal. Under the guise of creating three branches of power, for example, Karimov has created a pocket parliament. Uzbekistan's judiciary, for its part, is wholly subordinate to the executive in political matters or corrupt in other cases. The government has also established human rights organizations, which distribute educational materials and supposedly work for the country's eventual democratization, while allowing the regime to show a reformist face to the international community.

All of these issues are well known, as human rights groups can testify, and as the Helsinki Commission's reports and the State Department's annual reports document. But in the last year and a half, another issue has come to the fore: persecution of religious believers. It is true that Uzbekistan's constitution enshrines freedom of religion and Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism and Islam have emerged from Soviet-era repression into the open. But the local religious establishment has supported the government's campaign against non-traditional religions, including Protestant denominations. Uzbekistan's new legislation on religion is the most repressive in the former Soviet Union: as of August 15, any church with fewer than 100 members must close down and stop all activities. Church leaders who fail to comply will be subject to criminal charges. Churches that manage to register are strictly forbidden to engage in any proselytism or missionary activity, and private religious instruction is banned.

This law contradicts OSCE commitments, under which freedom of speech applies to religion. But from the perspective of stability, the most worrisome development has been the campaign against Muslims who want to practice their faith outside Uzbekistan's religious establishment, which, like the parliament and judiciary, is under tight government control. Under cover of an attack on ''Wahhabism,'' a conservative form of Islam associated with Saudi Arabia, the authorities have cracked down on all expressions of piety. Men with beards and women covering their heads are subject to repression. Independent mosques have been closed, Imams have been arrested or ''disappeared'' and their followers intimidated. In late 1997, a full-fledged campaign against alleged Islamic radicals and criminals began in the Fergana Valley. Uzbek authorities charged that Islamic radicals beheaded a policeman and committed other crimes. But according to reports by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, the ensuing wave of arrests indiscriminately targeted pious Muslims. There is good reason to believe the claims of those arrested that they were tortured in jail, denied food, refused contact with their attorneys and forced to confess to crimes. the conduct of the trial, which Human Rights Watch representatives personally monitored, was appalling, with the judge ignoring the recantations of guilt extorted by torture and other blatant violations of due process.

Mr. Speaker, let me be plain. I support freedom of religion, not Islamic fanaticism or criminal behavior. Moreover, I am concerned about reports by Uzbek officials, which knowledgeable Western journalists take seriously, that Islamic groups are training in Tajikistan and Pakistan to destabilize Uzbekistan by force of arms. The environment in the region is indeed worrying, considering that the radical Taliban has taken over most of Afghanistan, Iran remains hostile to western values and Islamic terrorists are threatening the physical security of Americans. But the blanket condemnation of Muslims in Uzbekistan is worse than unfair—it is counterproductive. Such a policy applied in Uzbekistan, where declining living standards are creating desperation in some quarters, could lead to a radicalization that might not have occurred otherwise.

If this growing problem is to be addressed, Uzbek authorities must come to an understanding with the Islamic community based on a recognition that the government cannot control all aspects of society and certainly not matters of faith. Room must be found in Uzbekistan's political process for religious and political dissidents.

It is not too late for such an initiative and a particularly timely opportunity is approaching: parliamentary elections are scheduled for 1999. As of now, only government-created parties will be allowed to participate, whereas Erk and Birlik, the democratic-nationalist parties that arose in the late 1980s, remain banned. It is high time to readmit them to the political life of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Speaker, for Uzbekistan, good relations with the United States are a critical basis of geostrategy. I intend to send this statement to President Karimov, and I hope that he takes to heart these well-meaning suggestions.

ON THE DEATH OF MURIEL HUMPHREY BROWN

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to an extraordinary leader in Democratic politics in Minnesota and nationwide, Muriel Humphrey Brown. Brown, the widow of Vice-President, U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Hubert H. Humphrey II,